EBBSFLEET GARDEN CITY

1. Summary

1.1 This report updates Members on the Ebbsfleet Garden City development which is to be brought forward by the Ebbsfleet Development Corporation (EDC).

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 That Members note the contents of the report.

3. Background and Discussion

3.1. The government’s intention to bring forward development at the Ebbsfleet Garden City through the creation of the Ebbsfleet Development Corporation (EDC) was announced in the Chancellors Budget Statement in March 2014.

3.2. Since that time, Dartford Council and the other two affected authorities (Gravesham and Kent County Council) have been working alongside central government officers and the Chairman Designate of the EDC, Michael Cassidy. Much of this work has related to the practical issues of setting up the EDC, although some preparatory technical work to lay the foundations for the EDC has also taken place.

3.3. The EDC officially came into being on 20th April 2015. A Board has now been established and two meetings have been held. These were not public but future meetings will be, subject to commercial sensitivity. The matters for discussion centred on governance and performance of the EDC and working with the local authorities on Planning matters. The Board comprises of 9 members. Dartford is represented by Cllr Jeremy Kite. The other public sector representatives are the leaders of Kent County Council and Gravesham Borough Council.

3.4. The EDC’s planning powers are to commence on 1 July 2015. These will be restricted to determining planning applications, with plan-making powers remaining with the local authorities. Decisions made by the EDC within this authority’s boundary will need to be in conformity with Dartford’s Local Plan, currently comprising the Core Strategy 2011, saved policies from the Local Plan 1995 and the Development Policies Plan, once that is adopted. Dartford’s Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD’s) will also apply. The Council will be responsible for any further plan documents and SPD’s covering the EDC area.

3.5. Existing S106’s will continue to be enforceable if the planning consent to which they relate is being implemented. The EDC, in respect of its functions as a planning authority, will be a successor to the Borough Council as a party to S106 agreements where the individual agreement allows for this. In these circumstances, the EDC will be bound by the provisions of the agreement relating to the planning authority and will
be responsible for collecting monies and implementing these provisions.

3.6. In order to ensure a smooth handover, a Service Level Agreement is to be agreed between the EDC and the local authorities, which will put in place arrangements for the local authorities to administer the Development Control service until January 2016. This means for planning applications falling within the Dartford Borough area of the EDC, Dartford officers would carry out assessment of the planning application and make a recommendation in a report to the EDC. The EDC Planning Committee would make the decision.

3.7. A Memorandum of Agreement is also being drawn up between the EDC and the local authorities. This is intended to provide for ongoing collaboration, liaison and information sharing between the authorities on planning matters relating to the EDC area and its immediate surroundings. This collaboration will include matters relating to physical and community infrastructure issues.

3.8. The EDC is proposing to procure an Infrastructure Strategy setting out a detailed analysis of the main infrastructure items that will be required, how these could be secured and the cost implications. These are likely to include requirements to support the community, such as health facilities and schools, as well as physical infrastructure to enable the development, such as electricity and drainage. The report is to be submitted to the Chancellor to feed into the Spending Review.

3.9. In terms of masterplanning the area, a baseline study has been carried out by appointed consultants and this is close to being finalised. This study summarises known information about the EDC area, including existing planning consents and legal agreements associated with them, constraints and requirements. The next step is to be the procurement of a Framework Masterplan for the area which will provide a clear overall vision for the future development of the garden city.

4. Progress on the Ground

4.1. Dartford officers are continuing to determine applications for reserved matters and conditions on the active sites within the EDC area. They are engaged with developers as they draw up their future planning proposals. The first 150 homes are under construction on the first phase of Eastern Quarry at Castle Hill. Discussions with the developer are taking place on Phase 2 and phase 3, and the Castle Hill local centre. Kent County Council has made a recommendation to the Secretary of State for Education on the selected operator for the first primary school on-site and are awaiting a decision. Land Securities have appointed an architect to design the school. The school is intended to be open in September 2016 although this may initially be in temporary accommodation.

4.2. Progress is also being made on the Northfleet West Sub-Station, to be known as Ebbsfleet Green. Following the outline consent last year,
reserved matters for the scheme are being worked up. Submissions have already been made for the landscape and road elements and the substantive submission for the first phase of built development is expected shortly. Groundworks are likely to start on site later this year.

4.3. At the Swanscombe Peninsula, Officers are working closely with the promoters of the London Paramount scheme, as they draw up the masterplans and carry out the detailed assessments for the scheme. The development is to be determined via the Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) process. This means it will not be determined by the local planning authority but by the Secretary of State, following a recommendation by a Planning Inspector who has assessed the scheme. The Council remains a statutory consultee and has formal status within the process as a Host Authority, even after the EDC take on planning powers, and will be submitting a Local Impact Report, to which the Inspector will be required to have due regard. Submission of the proposal is programmed for August 2015, with a decision by the end of 2016. If the proposal is consented, construction works are expected to commence shortly after this.

5. Relationship to the Corporate Plan

5.1 To ensure that regeneration in Dartford is sustainable and of benefit to all our communities.
To facilitate quality, choice and diversity in the housing market.

6. Financial, legal, staffing and other administrative implications and risk assessments

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7. Details of Exempt Information Category

Not applicable

8. Appendices

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<tr>
<td>Teresa Ryszkowska</td>
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